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LAKE AND WAR

AFRICAN LAND AND WATER VERSES

BY

ARTHUR SHEARLY CRIPPS

(Sometime Naval and Military Chaplain)

Author of 'Lyra Evangelistica,' etc.

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TO THE

RIGHT REV. FREDERIC BEAVEN, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

(SOMETIME CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

46285

NOTE

Certain of these verses have already appeared in *The East African Standard*, *The Treasury*, *The Commonwealth*, *The Church Chronicle*, *The Rhodesia Church Magazine*, *Southern Rhodesia*, and a U.M.C.A. Magazine, and my thanks are due to the Editors for permission to reprint.

A. S. C.

For thee, who spend'st thyself in word and deed,
With 'Sic dilexit mundum . . .' for thy creed,
I bring a gift to test that tolerance thine
Whether true metal from John's Patmos Mine—
The touchstone of these wayward songs of mine.

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PRELUDE

COR MUNDI

HEART of our Earth I hold this lake to be.
Or east, or west, or at the Antipodes
Look for Earth's limbs of sinew'd majesty!
Seek far to north amid the sleet-scourg'd seas
Her brains of conquest, brows of masteries!
But here
Earth's heart within Earth's bosom beats apace—
Earth's heart so fever-sick, so scant of grace—
Here where such storms rush up, such tide-winds veer,
And laughing moods run weeping moods a race
Whose laps are light and gloom, clouds' frown and sunshine's cheer.

Hadst thou not pangs enough without our guilt,
Heart of our Earth, whose wounds unstanch'd I sing?
What fires were kindled, and what blood was spilt
In those old days of Hate's o'ershadowing

More pitiful than these—our offering
To Love?
Have we not fann'd thy paynim feuds again,
And preach'd thy Jehad new, nor preach'd in vain?
O heart, the lesson of those years we strove
Who shall unteach? Not thro' one Heart but twain,
Christ's Heart and thee, one spear at once we drove.

O heart, wherefrom that pulsing art'ry runs
Of thrice a thousand miles—the snow-flush'd Nile!
Heart, whose green hopes as palms avert the suns,
Whose faëry dreams papyrus-plumag'd smile,
Fast, fast forget this fury and this guile
Of men!
Remember, heart, that herald sent before,
That wind, that prophet voice, which blew of yore
Up Nile to whisper peace and good-will when
Jesus in Egypt hom'd! Heart, evermore
Beat out His Own Heart's tune in creek, on shore—
That plashing lilt of peace God learn'd thy lake-waves then!

LAKE WARFARE

'And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another.'

REVELATION, VI, 4.

LAKE WARFARE

THE RIDING OF THE RED HORSE

[*See* REVELATION, VI.]

'TIS I have known on road of mine
Pangs many and mirth manifold,—
Burthen and heat and thirst repaid
By silver fords and fruits of gold.

'Tis I have seen on road of mine
Riders o'er hill-brows loom in sight.
Swift have they pass'd. As in a dream
A road's bend took them, or the night.

'Tis I have spied a lean black steed
Beneath a heaven of brass go by;
How fore-hoof bawled to hinder-hoof
'Rain—rain is far; want—want is nigh!'

'Tis I have heard a pale horse neigh
And watched his gaunt ribs arching near,
And view'd the First Fear on his back
While follow'd fast the Second Fear.

'Tis I have seen in daybreak glee
One on a white mount breast my hill—
Victorious ere he came to me
And, as He went, victorious still.

These came and went. One clings—he rides
Aside our lake a red witch-mare.
Now on our islands, now our shores,
The rifles crack, the thatch'd huts flare.

Come ride betwixt me and our Foe
Who spurs thus grimly by my side!
Come, White-horse Rider, overthrow
Red horse, and horseman deeper dyed!

SHIP AND MAN

[H.M.S. *Winifred* and her sometime Captain (C. B. Blencowe), November, 1914—June, 1916.]

LAUS Deo! Small things here have had their day,
Mimic our sea, puny our guns' array,
Playground and playthings fond be they confest,
For mammoth war looks hence to North and West!
Yet praise God here for man and ship that cast
About for chances rare, and clutch'd them fast!

These aim'd one foe to fight, to wrest one prize,
To win through one long hour of agonies.
Confederate these—with eagle-swoop they spurn'd
The one war-hawk that for our dovecotes yearn'd.
These spoil'd that lake-mill, all one hour of fear
These clung the lin'd fire-spitting beaches near,
And salv'd one boat forlorn.
But now no more
May Ukerewe, or Nafuba shore,
Or that Lubembe bight which cost so dear—
See ship and man confederate as of yore.

Ship, little ship, not little was thy fame
While he was with thee yet to stir and strive;
Ship, mayst thou long this war accurst outlive,
But not the mem'ry of that captain's name!

ON OUR ADVERSARY IN EAST AFRICA

HE dar'd to suffer what he dar'd inflict:
The odds were huge and grim.
Hemm'd in with steel, his land so derelict—
The issue look'd not dim.
Into the poor light scale he pour'd for weight
Rich waste of life and limb.
The conqu'ring cause it was—seemed good to Fate,
The conquer'd cause to him.

IN ACTION

[St. Nicholas' Day, 1915.]

THE scythe-song of the bullets in the air,
Their lead or steel threshing the water's face,
The shell-torn thickets of a lakeshore fair,
The bloodstains on a deck! These all have place
In my remembrance of that fated day—
When our sane glad World grop'd her crazy way
Entranc'd (each booming gun—War's minister—
A belle dame sans merci enchanting her).

PEACE AND WAR

[Off Bumbireh Island.]

MAY we find more of mercy than we gave!
The naughty flames are sneering, shamed and red,
At the broad-staring day. The stores go up
In pillar'd clouds. Like Satan's thuribles
The thatch'd roofs smoke in joyless sacrifice
To a yet joyous heaven. From raided byre
Or well-robb'd garden we will feast to-night.
Bring their rude boats aboard and splinter them.
How much of toil those few blows bring to nought—
Toil of the stitch'd seams and the shapen wood!

Now we'll go sailing on the self-same bay:
On that side writhes the smoke-waste, but on this
All is unspoilt. The green hill's elvish cone
Peers up from a deep thicket's richer green
Lining that lake-shore, whereby slips a tide
Thro' a strait channel shoal'd mysteriously.
Past the white sail's drawn curtain I may view
Both forest glows and glooms, and bright spray flung
Where the tide falters, and the rocks look out;
Here on my lips as in a dream come true
Lingers old music—'foam of perilous seas
In faërylands forlorn.' What faëryland!

And how forlorn!

'"Forlorn!" The very word
Is like a bell to toll me back.'

My fate
Bends with that omen, and our boat must turn.
The wind blows chill. The sun is dropping fast.
The smoke drifts homelessly, in sight again.
Our dove-winged peace-craft speeds us placidly
To home in yon dark war-ship sinister.

How many bells will greet at this same hour
The Angel's 'Hail!' his news of peace and joy!
Nay! I will mock not with those words to-night.

MARCHING

THRO' Entebbe!
(Very full of flow'rs—Entebbe!)
Up the road we go
Five miles forward, five miles backward,
Stepping firm and slow!
Feet of mine with feet beside me
Out of step I know.
'Hind*! and Hind! and Hind!' the tune is
Those brown feet go by.
England! England! England!'
Loud my feet reply.

From Karungu!
(Flea-spoil'd, jigger-vext Karungu!)
In the gunners' train!
Four miles forward! Four miles backward!
Seeking—but in vain,
River-horses black—as targets
For our maxims twain.
'Sport and War!' and 'Sport and War!' there
Fierce feet chim'd and cried.
'Peace and Quiet! Peace and Quiet!'
Mine in answer sigh'd.

* India.

Bound for Nansso!
Green, white-rice-milled, shell-teas'd Nansso!
On no route march then—
Five miles onward after landing!
Men and men and men
Thro' the cactus hedges filing,
Wading o'er the fen.
'Fun and firing! Fun and firing!'
Feet about me bawled.
'Keep it bloodless! Keep it bloodless!'
How my cold feet call'd.

THE WATCHER ON OUR THRESHOLD.

[Intelligence Department.]

AS in a bad dream I may see you now
Lank, flusht, chin-tufted, eyes as black as coal
Kindling like live coals, in that mood you well
Might pose for him who mortgage held of old
On Faustus damn'd—calling his mortgage in.
Those iron lips will no refusals own,
Forbidden witch-smoke curls in rings of blue
About your head, and your hand sinister
Fondles a swarthy lash of hippo-hide.
Upon your shoulder-straps, beneath your stars
Brass letters spell your errand—

OUT FOR BLOOD.

As in a good dream I may see you too—
A Bayard and a Quixote joyously
Boarding our boats, and scenting foes afar.
Green-white with fever, yet in merriment
You leap towards the peril and the flame—
Renew'd already, and to be renew'd
Fivefold in fivefold-heated furnaces
Of tumult, gun-fire, and the death of men.

Or yet again I see you smile on me.
No kinder host a tir'd guest ever found.

O King of many rifles, many skins,
Lake-Ranger, Marches' Warden, Argus-ey'd,
O always brave, and sometimes pitiful,
O Borderer, whose head your foe hath pric'd,
Gay as knight errant, as knight Templar stern,
In that fine censer of your fearlessness
O burn sweet incense of reproachlessness !

THE VULTURES

THERE may be carrion on this cruise, I trow:
There may be trouble on this voy'ge, I fear.
And why? I saw them perch aboard but now—
Both harbingers.
I knew him by his wear—
Him of the tabs and red-cross, also him
With shoulder-crosses bright (or rather dim;
He keeps them ill). I know these vultures twain
That sight our toll of death or wounds afar—
The leech whose firm hand salves our bodies' pain,
The priest who fumbles o'er the unseen stain.
Ominous fowl are both in time of war.

THE FOURTH WATCH

WHEN but two hours at most an orbéd moon
Dips ere day break, and night at last is deep,
When cocks crow first, when tir'd folk turn in sleep,
When crows awake to chatter, doves to croon—
Watch!
On such a night may men their vantage mark,
March under moon, and rush a camp by dark.

When fever of the day first moves our skies
To solemn pallor, ere 'tis time to glow,
And after, when our lake morn's warfare dyes,
And peaceful clouds their Quaker-grey forgo—
Watch!
Men, that God's best of times use basely, say
'Attack at dawn, an you would win the day!'

THE END OF THE RAINS

NOW the sweet weather comes again :
The rain is less and less,
Dew-fresh and sun-bright is our wilderness
Where dove to dove sighs singsong of refrain,
And I in exile's lack-love loneliness
Must sigh for joy if yet I may not sing—
'O green land, glad land here,
God love you ! give you cheer !
Rejoice ! Yet O rejoice remembering
How this month leads on loss as well as gain.

The river falls, and open grows our way,
The storms no longer gloom the end of day,
The nights grow lamp'd and starred.
Great gifts are these,
O placid land, and yet such gifts must please
Not peaceful hearts alone.
Now over falling rivers, op'ning ways,
Over moon-lantern'd nights, and fair-skied days
Gloat those that set the battle in array.
God ! that these months were done !'

THE SIGNALLER

HE goes. On ledge of our wild hill he stands.
As the quiet night falls deep, his eager hands
Grow busy at his lamp: time after time
They'll beat a measure out: then times again
They'll pause, while thro' the dark his eyes will strain
At yonder ridge. As rhyme cries out to rhyme,
As bell to bell in glee of belfry chime,
As star to morning-star in choir of old
Made music of refrain,—
So lamp asks lamp with quiv'ring tongue of gold
Its questions manifold,
Nor asks in vain.

IN STATU PUPILLARI

[To our Rulers of Natives in Africa.]

HE'S but a child. You say so, do you not,
To prove his need of stripes, to prove your right
To lock his land away, and to requite
His work with wages of a child? You blot
His franchise out. You mildly murmur—'What
Use has he for a vote? His needs are slight,
His name upon a hut-tax roll indite,
And tax his blanket too, or cooking pot!'
A child? He bears the burthen and the heat
Of grown men's war (How fast child-porters die!
Who forced their labour, halv'd their pay, let ply
The hippo-hide?) A child! Your task how sweet—
To speed on blood-trails child-askaris' feet,
And set babe's hands to murder, standing by!

AFRICAN HIGHER IMPERIALISM

I.—Our German Adversaries

WHEREAS like Christians to forgive
These were but folly fond,
Please God, 'twill join them up to us—
The blessed colour-bond.

II.—Our Coloured Allies

Whenas by blood and sweat of theirs
We've won this holy war,
We'll build more fast 'twixt us and them
The blessed colour-bar.

A BOMBARDMENT

[Off the Mouth of the Kagera.]

IN the time to come haply some will tell
What was done to-day whether ill or well.
Theirs to wail for dead on that stricken shore
We have flogg'd with flame? Ours to steam away
With no dead to mourn, all things as before?
Nay with marks we keep, nay with signs we show,
Nay with seals of God set on us to-day—
Seals that yet attest what this day was done.
In one wise we came, otherwise we go
Seal'd as we were not but a night agone.
Why will men bewail but the dead alone?

THE NIGHT OF VICTORY

[July 14th, 1916. Muanza captured.]

BY the hill-road we wind, and down and down.
Here 'twas a few chance lives away were thrown,
There goods and gear were wildly made away.
Waste here ! Waste there ! We've won a town this day;
And who's the better? Seek a place to lie
In some moon-glorious stoep—the lake-palms by !
At least you have won sleep, so lay you down !

LAKE-FOWLING

[In Time of War.]

WELL might Saint Francis, might Saint Antony
On fowl or fish, as preachers, prove their skill;
Was not their sermon-stuff for fowl and man
All of the one piece—pity and good-will?

Now our bridge-pacers and our fo'c'stle hands
Haste to the lake-fowl as hot gospellers.
Their cordite gospel's roar on fowl and man
The self-same ban of death and wounds confers.

THE SUNDOWNER

WE stint rites now in war-time. Have we not
Laborious rituals of salutes and drills?
Is there not cause to set what's left of time
Undress'd, at ease, with slippers on its feet?
So as a rule we'll suffer Grace but once
(Should Grace be said here.) Week-day Offices
And Mass o' mornings fit free Englishmen
Surely a little stiffly, if at all.
While, I would say, think well ere you export
The English Sabbath hither hot from home.
We're near the Line here. Look before you load
The flesh unwilling, and the spirit weak!

Nevertheless ancestral promptings move,
And ceremonial craving stirs in us
E'en at the self-same hour that Francis chose
(The sundown hour when lutes grew passionate)
To bid men socialise and consecrate
With bells and Aves of his Angelus.

Let us in camp or station never fail
(Save when we're scrapping, or in Hospital)
To meet in ritual conclave at that hour!
Call dusky acolytes, bid these prepare
Our Vermouth Vespers, and (for life is short)
Omit not but prolong our liturgies
Of Foam and Spirit as the daylight dies!

AN ANNIVERSARY

[June 22nd, 1916.]

THE lake-wind bends the rice-ears ripe and brown
Under a blue-gray sunset-spangled dome.
A ship I watch for—bound my way of home.
Ship, ship, bring leave to lay my burden down—
My share of this war's load. A year has flown
Since first I landed on a morning, gay,
And sanguine as its sunrise. Now to-day
My mood's the sunset's, but to go my way
In peace. So wise have I in one year grown.

CHANGE OF TRUMPS

NOW on this lake's blue table rimm'd with green
Let our gay hazard under sun and stars—
Hazard of life—be not what it hath been!
We have had too much of Clubs, of blows and wars
(Remember now to count the sparrows' fall—
Our roll, no papers print, of porters dead!)
We've had too much of Diamonds—mentions pall,
There's glut of medals, ribbons, tabs of red.
Now let's have Spades, bid each black serf go free
To hoe his patch, and raise his crop at last!
Now let's have Hearts—if any hearts there be
To follow suit, and leave their hate's repast!

AN OLD CAMP

[Karungu.]

LONG ere the dawn we came, and anchor'd by.
Then in time's fulness Dawn looked out at us,
And red-gold took the ripples. Soon our boat
Was heading for the shore. How dolorous
The thatch'd lines stretch'd! No flag was left to floa
There on the fighting rock, or there on high
Where once they'd signal when a ship was nigh.
The staves were bare. Still with a look of home
An arch'd hall beckon'd me where I had dined
Often of nights, and spread God's Board for Him
Sometimes of mornings. Now so long resign'd
To desolation, but a welcome grim
Methought it gave me. Fain I was to rue
My going-in, meseem'd so fiercely well
Its garrison of sandpests kept it now.
This was a famous camp. Record its due.
Men fever-sicken'd here, or fought, or fell.
Two nations' flags have crown'd yon gash'd rock's
brow.

But now its dusty war-wreaths fade away,
Having serv'd their time.
Go not again to see
Till poles have rotted, thatch all moulder'd be,—
Till our green lakeside win its own again,
Till corn o'ergrow the trenches, not before
Seek for old sakes the place we sought to-day!

AMONG THE CAMPS

GREEN hills, and rivers brown, and clouded skies,
Day's fair incoming, day's outgoing foul,
Solace of kindly welcomes and Good-byes,
Scantly-throng'd tables garnish'd altar-wise,
Low pray'rs, loud hymns, War's not far-distant scowl,
Courage of hopes, and calm of memories!
For such feast bitter-sweet, O say thy Grace, my soul!

LAKE COUNTRY

'Even as the Garden of the Lord.'—*Gen.* : XIII. 10.

THE PASSAGE

[Into the Kavirondo Gulf.]

THE sun glow'd on the green, as thro' the Strait
Our ship crept by. I watch'd upon the green
Sleek cattle and bronze herds. I think that Fate
Was kind to paint a picture so serene
That day I left the lake to sail no more,
And now these days of turning mem'ries o'er
That picture pleases best.

The moon-blanch'd beach
Where I slept cold before the town was won,
The gloom before first dawn ere we might reach
Our island prize, slow marching under sun,
And weary nights in trench'd camps, whither came
No foes but those that humm'd and those that stung,
Those lake-storms too, and that gun spuing flame,—
I glance these o'er again.

Yet to the same
Picture I would return the rest among,—
Sleek cattle, and bronze herds, and sun-kiss'd grass
Edging the Strait thro' which my ship must pass!

LAKE VICTORIA

HAZ'D with her morning mist I saw her, 'tired
With islands green—a colour emulous
Of her own azure's affluent bloom and sheen.
In smoke-wisps dark, as foil to glare, they spired—
The fly-clouds* from her bosom (languorous
With sighs for all the strife her shores have seen.)
Now yon high sun o'erspills her flood below;
Now gleams our war-ship's wake, as out we go;
Apocalyptic gold, so like to glass—
Her curl'd and dimpl'd waves behind us glow.
Alas!
How sham'd by peace of hers, ensuing strife we pa

* Clouds of lake-flies.

EQUATORIAL AFRICA

A COLD fresh height, a green rain-sodden plain
A grey soft-clouded sky!
And these are yours—
Brown Afric of my blue and golden hours?
Yet here your curse leers grim, your old oppression lours,
Yet here your troubled self, task-mistress, you remain!

PEACE OF MORN

IF any listen'd here I would not speak,
Words were as guns this truce of God to break.
Yon river's chantey from my bed I'd hear,
Then rub mine eyes, and watch the east grow clear
Some bedside flow'r I know not which, being sweet
I'd snuff it first, ere yet my fire be up
With bitter sweet of wood-smoke.
Soon, my cup
Being quaff'd, my pipe aglow, I'd have my feet
Black plains tir'd so by night, renew their zest.
Morn, fledge my feet to fly!
I'd bid you there on high
Soon 'Hail!' and soon 'Goodbye!'
Brown hill, and red hill-crest!

THE BURDEN OF THE LAKE-SHORES

WAS there never a Fall? Never a sire's mistake?
Answer, our Eden here, lady of lakescapes, reply!

* * * *

'Green and gold is my land,
Gold and blue is my sky,
Silver and blue is my lake,
Clouds, at a wind's beck now, brooding armies disband.
Watch the arising of Earth, her sheen at her Lord's command!
Is not her light come anew? Her Dayspring arisen again?
Broke not her New-Year bright, so rainbow-clear after rain?

* * * *

What but a will in ruins would ruin a day so good?
Hark to the racking cough, and the venom-spit of the gun!
Man goeth forth as a giant, rejoicing his courses to run.
Man goeth forth to his work and labour till set of the sun,
Rapt at his red Asperges—spraying the shores with blood!

NEAR THE EQUATOR

THE sun sets moody in a hazing sky
Clouded for trouble, ere the night be out.
Woods, marshland, meadowland—brood opulent
Above yon blue lake-levels affluent.
Here is Earth's waist with riches wrapt about,—
Ominous riches. Here may you or I
Behumm'd, bestung, in our brief night-sleep lie
And dream rare iv'ry dreams ere yet we die—
Storm-routed, fever-ambush'd, sunshine-spent!

MIRAGE ON THE LAKE

TREE-FEATHER'D headland there, and island green
Hung mirag'd splendours o'er the quiet blue;
I sailed that for the while had done with war,
And lo! the day being young, my port not far,
Life's venture, as I sail'd, came clear in view
A-poise 'twixt height reveal'd and depth unseen.

THE LAKE-STORM

WAS she a flutt'ring Angel with wide wings
Of homespun gray, who brooded o'er our lake
That night we sail'd, one with goodwill to slake
Thirst of our gardens, and to flush our springs?
Grave's victories and death's triumphal stings
Were in the song she sang, the words she spake
(Time after black time ere the morning brake)
By thunder's roar and moan and mutterings.
Her eyes flashed lightnings. In those lightnings less
Awe of her zealot's mood grew clear to me
Than in her cold stern downpour of distress
Upon a huddled crowd's dank wretchedness,
That brav'd her worst on deck. An Angel she
Who held men's lives cheap in her ministry!

THE LOST NIGHT

THE crack'd-voiced blood-fly hums at feet and head
Now draw your blanket fast, and long for morn !
Fev'rish and spent are you, let hope and scorn
Make strong your heart ! Shall not this night be spe
Like other nights as long? Give o'er the boon
Of sleep ungrudg'd ! Soon o' God's mercy, soon
The cocks will crow, the sun tilt o'er your bed.
Escap'd from night, and all its malice vain,
How will you love the long rays, as you lie
List'ning the warm lake-water's lap and sigh,
Basking in light of heav'n and peace again !

PALM-TREE COUNTRY

[To a Native War-Comrade.]

PALMS of sweeping fronds, lake so wide and blue,
Grace this exile land that is home to you.
So will Heaven seem, should we thither come,—
Exile's land to me, but to you your home?

Heav'n! 'Twere meet and right palms should grace
that land
With no night nor sea, palms by dawn-winds fann'd
With the lapping folds of a great lake's breast
Near enough to sound see-saw songs of rest.

Such—'twere home to you, such—no home to me!
O my God make good one small moor to be.
Brown and gaunt within that lake-country green,
One bare granite gorge where no palms are seen.

SANGO BAY

UNDER yon rose-clouds royal, out of a lilac haze
Fashion'd of sundown mist and smoke of the forest as well,
Out of the creek's papyrus, the green fring'd canopied way—
Trails the long boats' procession tow'd to our ship in the bay.
Dark she bulks in the twilight, dimly her guns are shown,
Peace may she know for a night—she that knows what she has known!

FOREST SONG

INTO the forest, from our sky—
Its raging fire, its ruthless glow!
Stoop, thrid the forest arches low,
And let your patient hands untie
The creepers' tangles, till at last
Winning your way, you find my glade!

Into the forest, from our war—
Its madman's noise, its devil's mood!
Tho' peace be gone, yet ease is good—
Ease where alike the earth holds far
With dark and monstrous arms of hers
Our strife, and aches of vision blurs
With brooding calm of sleep and shade.

RESPITE

IN this bay, near our cruise's end, we lie—
Withdrawn, apart, and watch the ships go by.
In blue and gold as yet—the victim day
Draws toward eve. Despite yon rain-threats gray
As yet the sun is bright, and warms to rose
Crags of a monstrous cliff in grim repose.
Give thanks for this our watch before the dark,
Give thanks for peace we have well learn'd to prize,
Give thanks for all good hours ere we embark—
War's dreary bluster once again to hark,
Again to stare into his blood-shot eyes!

SUNSET ON SERVICE.

THERE in the west our lamp is going out
With few clouds by.
The issue's all too clear.
We stand to lose—by breakers cuff'd about
On a strait deck. What gloom for us is near
When once the sun falls in his tragedy!
But there to east what mauve and rose you see,
What arras width, what dyes, what Tyrian dress!
'Tis with our sunset's war as it hath been
With every weary war the world hath seen,
It's heart's red pomps and hectic braveries
Adorn but not amend its bitterness!

TO THE LAKE

JEWEL I leave, I would remember you,
My sapphire huge with breadths and deeps of blu
Sapphire with pearl's glow of pure mysteries,
And hard clear diamond glints of cruelties,
And ruby flecks of blood, and opal dew
From faëryland. May gold your setting be—
Gold of God's Love for time and time's deriding!
God love your folk, with sun and rain deriding
Our 'good' and 'evil,' our 'unjust' and 'just';
When of His jewels He maketh invent'ry,
Be it remember'd that these were but dust!

HOMINGS

'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem.'

—PSALM cxxxvii, 5.

A SINGER'S RETROSPECT.

SHIPS unknown and guns unlov'd
Would you have me hymn to-day—
I that lov'd the peace I sang
Ere I came at war to play.

I would sing of what I knew
In the lonely paths I trod—
Time by time, year out, year in,
Far from many, near to God.

Harking ears and heeding eyes
Glean the old well-yielding ways.
Part enhancing, part they hide—
Wind and mist of lapsing days.

Tracks by brown feet trac'd I'd sing,
Waggon-ways deep-gash'd and worn,
Rhythmic seasons, thudding drums
Of our granite hills forlorn.

Here a many sights and sounds
Daze and thrill mine eyes and ears:
These I may not sing as those
Known and lov'd for years and years.

PORT-MEADOW.

[Outside Oxford, remembered in War-Time.]

GEESE and green grass and river let me see
At least the once again! and let me lie
The once more by that Upper Riverside
As in old days ere Peace fell sick and died,
Or days when we—who watched a troubled sky—
But sigh'd that War had come, nor knew what
War would be!

NEAR GADZIBA ISLAND

FOR the remembrance of a time
And times, and time's dividing too—
I pour my thanks, I make my rhyme—
Remembering you, O England, you !

We swing towards the cloudy land
Upon our cheerless way of wars.
No lights are lit : above yon strand
Night broods with alien southern stars.

Welcome and lamps and peace we lack,
Yet 'tis an island, 'tis a shore—
So the old dream of England's back—
Say Grace for that, and ask no more !

MAY-DAY

I

AH me! How Promise kiss'd with Perfectness,
Summer with Spring, this gracious day of old
When Kent for me would copse and meadow dress
With gauds of white and purple, pink and gold.
Years after those, long years, that now are old,
This day among all Essex days I'd bless—
Day due when Essex white-thorn budded more,
Day due when Essex black-thorn blossom'd less.

Far, far to South—she keeps her grace, this day.
My land*—the land that in me claims her own
(Land of starr'd roof and brown floor granite-strown)
With May cries truce to Summer's rain-flusht sway.
Then heigh for tentless camps and roads unknown
To south as north how kind the change of May!

* Mashonaland.

II

May-Day ! Not south nor north to-day we lie
But at the world's waist off a weary shore*,
Where the years drest in sodden green go by,
And Sickness breeds and broods the boskage o'er.
What if May bring less rain, and April more?
Still burns the blue, yet sobs the grizzled sky,
Rich Summer reigns, but Summer reign'd before,
Rathe Spring lives on, but when did Winter die?

Yet 'mid our long sad-sweet monotony—
A May-Day's footfall I discern afar,
In this year's ashen heaven I spy a star—
A May-Morn Star of mutability
Shining to daybreak. Land, so used to war
And grief, Peace comes,—your May of English gl

* German East Africa.

BEATI VENATORES

[In my absence from Mashonaland Native Mission-work]

HARK! A horn sounds to south. This head is grey,
These eyes at night are dim, this ear is dull,
Yet my blood thrills my veins, my heart grows full—
Rememb'ring how thro' kloof, o'er krantz, in vlei—
A Chace Divine seeks an eternal prey.
Me (here content month after month to lull
Myself with shepherd's task-work slack and null,)
That stern horn calls o'er hills and far away.

Rood-shadowed Woodcraft wherewith Francis wrought,
Wayfarer's frenzy such as Xavier knew,
Passion of Paul's own for the souls he sought,—
These be my wages! Nay, no wage is due.
Be't giv'n me Hubert-like Love's Face to view
In hunter's trophy mine, in quarries Blood hath bought!

ON LEAVE

[Feb: 1916.]

NEAR am I come to my own land's delight,—
A sea-worn shipman, putting in at night
To see my friends, and bring them Gifts, to smile
Across a board, and o'er a pipe reclin'd
To praise such peace as God for earth design'd,
To talk the half-moon down into her west,
The east-star almost up, to talk my best
Of plows and books and bearing loads for men,
And so to sleep. By daybreak's candle then
Seeking an old Shrine, I'd vow candles there,
Ere out I put that alien coast toward
With Omen, Pilot, and with no despair,
Adventuring as afore.

Myself I hold
Both wise and happy should I stow aboard
New image of the things I lov'd of old—
Such image as chryselephantine seems
Of gold apocalypse, and iv'ry dreams.

Lo! North by east a granite cone in sight—
Near am I now to my own land's delight!

AT A RIVERSIDE REST-HOUSE.

BROWN and broad the stream,
Brown and broad the hands
Ferrying as in a dream
'Twixt two faërylands.

Green the shores (who knows
Which the greener one?)
Green my hope of my repose—
Now my march is done.

Peace's worth I prove
In a thatch'd hut nigh,
Such a bivouac would you prize—
March a day as I!

Brown hands of the ford
In my dreams become
Hands to grasp a green hope's cord—
Ferry-rope of home!

EXILE IN AUGUST

OVER the hills, beyond the rivers far
Shines in the fev'rish night a southward star
Somewhere beneath it surely winter clings
About my southern home, and this month there
The trees are bright with blood-red blossomings,
But lack their leaves as yet. O God, to go
Southward ere yet September's showers be here,
Ere yet our southern hills catch fire and glow
With flaming lilac, rose, and bronze and green,
Ere yet grow brown our bushes' silv'ry sheen,
Ere yet the swallows bring our summer nigh!
O but to come next month some night of stars,
And hear the drums of peace, and know one's wars
Were o'er and done! To see against the sky
My own thatch'd hut stand up, and clambering
Up granite stairs, keep vigil with the stars
All one woodfire-lit night before I die!

A WAY OUT

FROM the skirts of a war as I slipp'd with glee
The mood of a dead man wrought in me.
He mutter'd of old, that terrible one,
Who had fled and followed and dar'd and done,—
'Zeruiah's sons too hard they be.'
He had faced the stern, and watch'd the grim,
He had dipp'd his hands in many a deed,
Nevertheless mood wrestled mood
While from his throne he watch'd them bleed—
Joab's victims by one and one.
And he sigh'd once more to sleep in the wood,
And to hide his head in the wild goat's lair.
Yea, not for nought in those years of old
He had lov'd his father's flock to fold,
And climbing o' nights the stone-ledged hill
To know One stood o'er the topmost stair.
All of a sudden his heart and will
Cried out to God for a wild bird's wings
To fly from the snares and the cruelties
Out to the veld, where men are few,
Where Peace is rous'd by each sunrise new,
And God leans down from His lonely skies!

HOMING SONG

LONG ere the sun I wake
(A shore's not far !)
Low lurks a rearguard moon,
High rides a vanguard star,
I'm heading home to-day,
I've done with war.

A year I spared to give
(My store runs low !)
Did ever year as mine
Run month by month so slow?
Did ever hate of hate
As my hate grow?

The sun is bright on deck
(The ship heads home !)
Think we of things to-day,
And O forget we some !
Think whereunto we go—
Not whence I come !

BEIRA BAY

DEEP hues upon their hems they wear
The skirts of home flung far—
Last view'd when we go out from peace,
First when we come from war.

Long since from Beira Bay I sailed.
Low coast-line, sands, and sea
(That eve of eves I sail'd forlorn)
Alike wore grey for me.

This morn of morns I came again.
'Tis eve in Beira Bay:
What overspills of Ophir gold
Have flooded out the grey!

AS THE RIVERS IN THE SOUTH

[At the end of a Lake-war.]

NOW Deo Gratias! Are not suns I left there,
Shipmen at peace upon a lake's peace lighting?
Deo Volente, pray God's Peace to succour
Folk in far swamps yet following, fleeing, fighting!

Sun-up to sundown now in golden weather
I stride at peace so free, so unforbidden,
Walking the wide and starry night unchalleng'd,
Kindling my camp-fire on the ridge unchidden.

Stream in my happy south, O rain-blest river,
Flusht now to rise and wend thy way of yearning,
Unto our joys forgone, O long-parch'd brother
God hath vouchsaf'd at last a like returning!

VIA MYSTICA.

[At home in Mashonaland.]

WEAR sandal-wings of Venture's charm
What time you flout the stings of Harm :
Your head hold high amid the stars
What time your feet wage footsore wars :
'Tis the long miles you parch and burn
That water-pools to nectar turn :
'Tis being scant and bak'd in haste
Gives bread the true ambrosia's taste.

Fire's glow and sky's roof-silver rare
Pay a day's debts, and leave to spare :
O' weary nightfalls—veld-grass dry
For limbs' rest may with rose-leaves vie :
When the dusk's deep, your way unknown,
Hold the High Feast of the Alone :
Wrapt in His Own rich livery
Of loneliness, trust Him to be
Both Way, and lone Way-farer's Glee !

DIRGES

'And I looked and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death.'

REVELATION VI. 8.

FOR MANY A HEAD-STONE

[A conjectural Epitaph.]

PILE not his grave with vague pomposities.
This man knew what we all know who have been
Into War's Shrine, and peep'd behind its Screen.
Who spoke to him of 'holy wars' spoke lies.
All in an English summer sweet with hay
From garden of his own (where roses blow)
For passing of a cup 'twas his to pray.
'Twas his to fail in pray'r, 'twas his to bow
Before his God, and drink, and go his way
(Way of War's red sights), to the peace unseen.

DIED OF WOUNDS

[Robert Aslin, Lieutenant R.N.R., December 7th, 1915.]

NOT for himself he car'd, but for the boats—
His wounds of breast and spine were dealt him
A homely soul! About his name there floats
Fragrance of Yorkshire moors, a hearthside glow
Kindles his friendship in our memories,
And part recalls things long before the war
Ere tropic suns or drinks had prov'd our foes.
Our side's the worse, and he's the better far.
His was a better type than ours, God knows.
Grudge not his better luck! At peace he lies.
God knows he pick'd his man well—did that foe!

ON A FELLOW-MISSIONARY

[W. Moorhouse joined the Rhodesia Regiment on Service in E. Africa, January, 1916, and died in the following March of dysentery. He had worked at Saint Faith's Mission, Rusape, for some time, and was a mason by trade.]

HE built in stone and brick. But on a day
We 'prenticed him to that unearthly trade
Whereby we seek brown living stones to lay
All on the one foundation Love hath laid.
At God's long art in man's brief life he wrought—
Building with bricks men made, with souls Blood bought.
War hath unbuilt our builder. Christ, rebuild
Him in Thy Day! Now light perpetual gild,
And rest eternal wrap his ruins dim!
Now build we better—as remembering him!

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT

[To some African Porter.]

THOU barest food and loads for us, our beast of burden thou!
Thy labour's past our forcing, perforce we let thee die.
Take, eat the Ration for thy Road, God send thee Angels now!
God pay to thee in kind our debts for transport and supply!

THE DIRGE OF DEAD PORTERS

NOW over many graves, but few being blest,
Now for a many souls, so many past,
So few recorded, sing one dirge of rest!
As 'twere one flow'r upon a mountain cast,
As with one versicle a host commend
(So many and so friendless) to a Friend!
Who reaps the guerdon of their footsore pain,
Of flies', and suns', fevers' and fluxes' drain?
England—that must be snatching ere her time
Fruit like to drop? Heroes—a few that climb
On these poor bodies' waste, and crow their day
As cocks on dung-hills thron'd?
No, rather say
The gain's their own. For are they not away
From Africa—the home that's no more home
To her own children? God, Thy Kingdom come:
Grant these to find Thy Mercy in that Day!

CULLEN GOULDSBURY

Poet of ' The Pace of the Ox,' and ' The Shadow-Girl.'

[Late of Lake Staff and 1st King's African Rifles, died at Tanga on August 27th, 1916.]

SO as a war's forc'd loan we've lent thee now,
Our land finds few interpreters, and thou
Wast one. Methought not wisely but too well
Thou would'st chameleon parts aforetime play—
Wearing our hues alike of Heav'n and Hell.
Yet who, that reads between thy lines, would say
Thy fellow-feeling for our petty views
(More narrow than our dorps' gum-avenues,)
Was all benevolent complacency,
Ah ! For those earthly bests our land may know—
Our veld, its daylight calm, its twilight glow—
Bests money buys not, bests that priceless be—
How broad thy love, how big thy reverence !
Much hast thou given us ere thy going hence,

Now take what we may give, and leave the rest,—
Take earth of ours thy world-wide Church hath blest,
Sleep, body, by our sea, beneath our stars!
Go, soul, to peace in honour from our wars,
Interpret there a land than ours more kind—
A land for all its colours—colour-blind!

ON A DOCTOR

[J. Ritchie Brown, M.D., late of Mashonaland, mortally wounded in Flanders.]

AH! If 'twas given him thus to crown his days
At his white blameless task in war's red blam
Be it remember'd by what steps he came
To such apotheosis! Be the praise
Of how he salv'd and heal'd dark simple flesh
Yet unforgotten! Keep the memory fresh
Of how o' days or nights he rode so bold
By moor and ford for mercies manifold!
If we may never to that sky-line rise
Wherefrom he pass'd in flame of sacrifice,
Pray we to plod at lower levels dim
In patient courage, as rememb'ring him!

ON A SCOUT

[Jack Judson, B.S.A.P., killed in East Africa.]

HE stood for kindly faith, and honour clean
In our dorp—lewd and crooked, dingy, mean.
How much we stood to lose that day he went:
How much we stood to gain by his return!
We reckon'd not why Love our pray'r would spurn.

Love set the scales. Scale of his worth, I ween,
Dropt weighted well. Scale of our discontent—
That ask'd him back to share our banishment—
What hinder'd it light to the beam to leap?
What was our vantage worth to weigh it deep?
Would aught we gain'd the loss for him redress?

Wherefore Love overrul'd our selfishness,
Nor gave
That swift return our hearts were fond to crave,
But bade us watch in hope, bade him in honour
sleep.

DEAD IN THE DESERT

[Leo Tolstoy.]

THE Banners fly, Banners a Church hath blest.
He, the unblest dead, crying from the sod,
Cites Church and Banners to the Assize of God.
Love, Who wast Banner o'er him, grant him rest!
Sandals of peace raw-new his tir'd feet shod,
A far fore-runner, scape-goat tracks he trod.
Grant him, O Lamb, his desert cry confest,
As John belov'd to learn upon Thy Breast!
Gladden his eyes with that Jerusalem—
Stretch farther his far sight, so dim at best,
That he may see as John Thy Bride, our Guest—
That Vision of men's peace men put from them!

ORATE AFRICANÆ, PRO AFRICANIS!

[A hymn to African Saints on behalf of African Askaris.*]

PERPETUA, Saint, and Saint Felicity,
Souls that were once, souls that again will be
Embodied joy, embodied constancy!

These War hath wrong'd, these thought no wrong of War.
These climb by night. Shine on them, ye that are
In Southern Cross of Christ as star and star!

What if Nile's length, what if a lake's width lies
Betwixt your home and his these days who dies?
He is your blood; blood not as water ties.

Shell-gash'd or bullet-gor'd, should any tread
Death's black stairway to-night, and dye it red,
Light ye an upstairs room, and make a bed!

* Native soldiers.

TRENCH-WARRIORS

OUR time it is an evil time,
This earth of ours is outrag'd earth,
It was not giv'n to these to climb
Out of their ruts of use and birth :
Yet in those ruts they prov'd their worth.

Their birth-right peace as sons of God
From unresisting hands was rent,
Their feet in meek allegiance trod
These chasm'd ruts of doom :—content,
As dust to dust by these they went.

But of such starry dust as theirs
Trust God to squander not one grain,—
God, Who His starry Wars prepares
Or ever yet His Christ shall reign,—
Wars where none strives or slays in vain.

TWILIGHT'S VOLUNTARY

IS his the undimm'd light, th' unvext repose?
Is his Cause granted
White before Christ's White Throne?
Whether it be or not—who knows? God knows.

His carrying-song by husky throats being chanted,
The seed-corn scath'd and sere he left being planted,
The bloodless volleys fir'd, th' unanswer'd bugle blown—
Be his the undimm'd light, th' unvext repose!

Is there aught yet may help his sunset-close?
Whether there be or not—who knows? God knows.
Ask that big Heart once broken to atone,
And, that It bids being done,
Leave well alone!

Ah! Grapple Envy, Envy of his lot
That like some strong man arm'd a grip has got—
A grip about me—and I guess'd it not!

Is he in undimm'd light, unvext repose?
Whether he be or not who knows? God knows—
God unto Whom too oft a spirit goes
With such misgivings loth, and yet I think
Standing on his grave's brink
That he now gone is glad that he is gone—
Being such an one!

LAKE-FAITH AND WAR-FAITH

'And I saw, and behold a white horse, and He that sat on him . . . went forth conquering, and to conquer.'

REVELATION VI. 3.

THE LAKE-WAR

A LAKE we sail—a lake both wide and fair—
Our lake which, as that lake of old, men sweep
With nets for silver spoil.
Faint not in pray'r
Should lead and steel or deck or beaches rake,
Christ is not far, altho' He seem to sleep.
In this our storm more dire than wind can make
Christ is not far, His Peace is near, His Will
Is this our storm as that of old to still.
Be comforted! His Will is yet the same.

What if on demon errand sent and sped
Ship after ship with doom of steel and flame
Draw to yon coasts of Wasekuma near?
Dare not rebuke nor blasphemy to fear!
Bethink thee how of old a white sail fled
To furl at last in roadstead Gadarene!
If guns as Antichrists blaspheme to-day,
Have we not read how rav'd the fiends of yore?
Have we not heard the wonders that have been,—
How Jesus gave the word none disobey
Upon that other Lake's wild further shore,
And men by fiends unmann'd grew men once more?

PATRIA NOSTRA

SHE was so fair, and she was like to die.
Therefore we gave her that we grudg'd to God
Worked overtime, and died before our times,
For her sake waiv'd forgiveness, not forgiving,
For her, withstanding evil, withstood Christ.
Old idols, they were broken long ago,
But her idolatry's inviolate.
God, wilt Thou not repeal on her account
Thy narrow law 'none other gods but Me?'
Christ, wilt not pardon little children Thine
Keeping themselves from idols all but her?
We die, we die in sin, idolaters.
Win she or lose, God stands to lose us, we
To lose God for her. Ah! if she but claim'd
Us for the first death, not the second too!

CHURCH AND WAR

SOME men are at their altars praying still.
God bless them, tho' it be from out a cloud!
And some are shouting war-cries of goodwill
To speed our friends, and prophesying ill
To smite our foes, and some have justified
By stress of strife and crying, so they deem,
The ways of men to men. And some have died,
And found the knots cut, Life so fast had tied.
And now the harvest's past, the summer gone,
And I, long lonely, am yet more alone,
I that keep silence in this evil dream.
Hearken! My Saviour preaches from on high
His Mountain Sermon, still His challenge clear
Rings o'er priests' hollow voices, and the drear
Booming of shipmen's guns—'The Way am I,—
The Way none treads, the Truth that all deny.'

HYMN OF A LAKE-WAR

LORD, our lake-war is ending now.
Our goings-out and comings-in
On our lake's bosom well hast Thou
Preserv'd from perils, all but sin!
The odds are with us, and we win
By grace of Thine, or shall we say
By maxim's rap and lyddite's din,
By grace of guns and ships' array?

War on that Lake as wag'd by Thee
What was it to our war's delight?
'Twas but a puddle—Galilee—
Beside Nyanza. True, Thy Might
Blotted those many in their flight,
But they were swine. Behold to-day
No puny Gadara dare slight
Our grace of guns and ships' array!

So at our lakeside, Lord, we trill
Te Deum in this church of Thine,
Our glinting sheaths of shells we fill
With flow'rs—for Board of Love Divine.
Lord, let our lake arise and shine,
Change Galilean vigils grey
For ribbons, stars, staff-crimson fine,
For grace of ships and guns' array!

Lord, bid us Galilee forget,
Ask of us aught but to obey!
Above Thy Spirit bid us set
The grace of ships and guns' array!

FOR A PICTURE OF SAINT TELEMACHUS

[In War-Time.]

THE everlasting hill-path of the brave
This saviour took, himself he would not save.
Was there no other way but his? Then who are w
(Nay, write 'I' in 'we's' stead)
Who God's omnipotence teach,
And the resistless Grace of Christ on high—
To say we have no pow'r his way to reach,
And having reach'd to tread?
If but that August one had rush'd to die—
How many legions yet had drawn life's breath—
That bow'd to Cæsar ere they bent to death?
Why was none found to rush? Ah! Faith knows why

CONSCIENCE

UNTO one Lord do we or stand or fall.
What may it profit if the lamp we see
Above the shrine of Him, and haste to pray
Or commune with Him, an we be not free
To hearken whatsoe'er this Lord will say,
To answer—from what height soe'er He call?
Ah ! What avail'd it—if at our behest
He cross'd our threshold, yet lack'd mastery
To rule that house we bade Him to as guest.
Then bring what makes a votive off'ring dear,
Bring all, that He may choose from out our gear !
His choice in burnt-off'rings who guesseth, who?
He is a Fire—with Whom we have to do.

OBJECTORS

I

'HAIL Cæsar! Thee we deathward wending hai
'Tis brave to claim him so, and Cæsar's be:
Tho' Cæsar fail them, they'll not Cæsar fail.
But what of these who cast no incense-grain
(Disdainful with Saint George's own disdain)
In brazier of this year's deity,
And not to death, but to dishonour pass—
Claiming the Cæsar of Eternity?

II

'We are a folk, an Empire—bound as one
About the symbol of a Cæsar's throne.
But the one boon, O Christ, we crave of Thee—
Guide us with Thy Saint George to victory!'
But no, upon our proud advancing day
Christ and St. George they met us on our way.

'Lord, whither goest Thou? Saint, whither Thou?'
'The way we went of old we tread it now,
'Tis we that pointed, we that face with these
Their way of sorrows, ours of victories,
These—that without the camp, reproach'd, forlorn—
Render to both their dues, God—glory, Cæsar—scorn!'

III

'England is certainly worth fighting for.'
Letter from a D.S.O.

Red-brick-new, stone-grey-olden,
Pasture-sleek, cornland-golden
With foison of bliss in thine August beholden!
Rest-at-home or sea-rover
Here or there, the world over,
None but is thy lover!
Unworthy or worthy—
Life stint they not for thee!

But these that would judge thee,
Their blood that would grudge thee,—
These of thine, have they reason
To give in their season
For semblance of treason?

They bear what they bear,
And they fear what they fear
For thee, as of yore.
But thy soul bulks for more,
In their eyes, than the rest of thee.
Then so loving the best of thee,
They grudge thee the less, and they grant thee the mor
To these as to those thou art worth fighting for!

HAGIOMACHY

DRAGONS are we to Michael of our foe?
Is he the dragon our St. George would slay?
Ask those fierce Saints who hate our hatred so—
Those Saints so deaf when we for vict'ry pray!

FAITH

I.—Bethlehem's Faith

MERCY and Truth chose midnight's hour to me
Righteousness in a stable kept her tryst
With Peace on earth—the one the other kist.
Out upon Time's rude floor there crept a Child,
Alpha, Oméga, They it was that smil'd
Out of His Own into His Mother's Eyes.
He lov'd, He wept, He bled, He climb'd away.
Yet still at hide-and-seek as Child He'll play
On Love-Feast Boards with Cups and Platters gay,
Or, wearing rags and sores for His disguise,
Hold Hands to us, God's Hands, did we but kn
But what are there save Wounds the truth to show?

II.—Easter's Faith

GOD'S Miracle of Love! That He should build
A Bridge *to* us and cross by Christmas-Birth!
Yet, all being said and done, it wears away—
This earth He reach'd—our landslip makeshift earth.
Lo! Love's fruition furthermore fulfill'd!
He built a Bridge *from* us on Easter Day.
At Day-Break cross'd He, and for you and me
Safe after-crossings of that Bridge He will'd—
To reach man's mainland and the world to be.

III.—The Mount's Faith

HE from a Mount preach'd folly to the wise.
Such folly! How could any understand?
He climb'd a Mount, and there from Foot and Han
No less than from parch'd Lips and clouded Eyes
He preach'd it o'er again. Soon understood
A few that folly, and that folly gained
For Wisdom, yea took, ate, and found it good.
But many took His Name, and then refrained
Nor took His folly. Were they therefore wise—
These many sons of God, to whom the skies,
His and their Father's skies, preach'd but in vain
'Resist not evil'?
Sunshine, fall of rain
Yet greet the unjust and the unjust's land
In heav'nly folly large, that laughs to scorn
Our talk of 'holy war.' O were we born
God's children verily, or nam'd in vain?
Sun shines, rains fall, when will we understand?

EX UMBRIS ET IMAGINIBUS

E'EN as a land forgets her war that was not she,
Let us forget ill dreams we dream'd that were not [we!
But let us not His Will of Peace as them forget
It was not ours, but ours (who knows?) it may be yet.

UNTO THIS-LAST

[In a slack time.]

AND after all these years to come to this !
Having rush'd my rapids, rac'd my reaches past—
To find in waters almost damm'd my bliss,
And there outlag my days, my weeks outlast—
Drifting with hope (half dread) to reach the calm
Of seas myrrh-bitter with remorse's balm !

GLORIA

THO' we have seen the night, we have seen the stars.
Into our hell, our low-down hell of wars,
Hath Christ descended, and our eyes have seen:
So Glory be as it hath ever been!

For one who when our Carrier Corps became
A Carrion Corps, wrought works in Jesus' Name,
And wiping Afric's sores, wiped England's fame,—
Gloria!

For one who by his own White Ensign stood,
Who was not out for bluff or loot or blood,
Who making good so lightly, yet made good,—
Gloria!

For such as nights a-cold would not refuse
Lest pris'ners might sleep colder. For the news
How town* we'd savag'd gave our dead their dues,—
Gloria!

Hate we our fire, our earthquake, and our wind!
Hark we to His calm Voice, Who calls to mind
How that albeit Baal on high be set,
Knees have not bent, mouths have not kiss'd him yet!

* Bukoba.

A LAKE MINISTRY

LONG months a lake I traversed, shore to shore
I pray'd a little, preach'd a little, cast
Some crumbs of bread upon its waters vast.
At length to Christ I said—'Take back to Thee
Thy trust for I would labour here no more,
Some have done better, others worse than me.'
At my chill pray'r there glow'd in His calm Eyes
Pity and scorn—twin fiery mysteries.
A lake! He wrought upon a Lake all day,
He on a Lake shore all night long would pray.

TO THE BLACK CHRIST

[Native Troops neglected in my Ministry.]

I SHOULD have learn'd to speak Your tongue, or found
One to go with me that would speak for me.
There on the lake about me and around
You wrought and suffer'd. But to you so dumb,
Blind, deaf—I seemed. Still to my Shepherd's place
I clung. Ah me! Another might have come—
A Black-Sheep Shepherd with both skill and grace
To minister to You. Great debts there be
Upon my soul. Let me each morning pray
For Wanyamwezi and Sekuma men,
Baganda, 'Kavirondo too, and when
Christmas is nighing, ne'er a gift forget
That Christmas Tidings to Your shores I send!
O Christ, I did it *not* to You, and why?
That year is gone. Its Wounds remain. O set
To wrongs that linger—Love's allotted term!
Cover my fault, dark Patience, with a Sigh,
Accept, dark Wounded Hands, balms that may not amend!

TRUE TO TYPE

[A Tribute to the Fathers of the Church of Rome on the Lake.]

DID then the words not miss me after all—
'Feed lambs of Mine, feed, feed and tend My sheep
Have not I learn'd (lamb'd in another fold)
To honour Peter's shepherding at last?
Is this not Peter's child—her ancestry
Prov'd by denials o'er and o'er again,
Denials not betrayals of His Love?
Bluff'd by the tide's tempestuous menaces,
She hath sunk at whiles, but all the while hath lov'd
Does not John outrun Peter often still
(Is she not heir to Peter's lagging feet?)
And yet she'd learn from love outrunning hers,
Would lay her own hot head on Jesus' Breast.
She hath slighted Christ, she that by drawing sword
Would right His wrongs. Justly have words of Pa
Withstood her shifts of weakness. Yet the strengt
Of Peter, as his weakness, lives in her.

She hath the Rock, and she hath shade to give:
She from a Rock yields Water, yes, and Blood.
Satan desires her yet, and Jesus too
Desires her with His Passover's desire.
He that with Peter ate, and eats with her—
Hath He not taught her lake-shore Shepherds here
Right well to feed or tend His lambs and sheep?

HER HOUR

NOW my heart sings out at last, and to Our Lady
In a strange house dwell I—dim grey curtain veil :
Years I've peered at her, and lov'd her in my fashion
Distant, shy, but not too shy to murmur her a ' Hail !

She then is my Mother, this same hour I heard her
Tell our secret clear, so clear I understood.
Not one year I'll grudge of thirty that I've wasted,—
Thirtyfold more dear is now her Motherhood.

Night and veld apprais'd you, Stella Matutina,
Wind and weather prov'd the worth of David's Tow'r
Fever-vigils valu'd you, Salus Infirmorum,
All of thirty years were giv'n to glorify this hour !

BON SECOURS

O EVENING Star, whose Babe's the Morning-Star,
Our Lady of Good Aid in Peace and War!
Thine Angel's hour is here, the sun is low.
Hosts hail'd thee once, mere sentries hail thee now.
Have such defections cost thine Heart a sigh?
Surely to that Heart, so with God at one,
Faith rul'd by pow'r and use is faith undone.
To Christ and thy dear Heart one Ave free
(Such as I speed to thee,)
Dovecotes of clipt-wing Aves can outvie—
That know not how to fly
Down wind with Love, in airy liberty.
Hail, Star of mine, speed, wings, to seek that star—
Our Lady of Good Aid in Peace and War!

TO SAINT MONICA OF AFRICA ON HER DAY

[See S. Augustine's Confessions.]

WHY have you so few shrines in this your land
Why is the day in May your death once ble
So little mark'd? Hath Fate with affluent hand
Doled us so much of what in you was best?
Lack we not homes, and homeliest loyalties,
And love that prays God's long-lost Images
(Children had once) back into men at last,—
We that go kinless in a land so vast,
We that see seldom homes, and those but bare,
We that are many souls—with few to care?

TO ALEX. GORDON, WARWICKS

[Already C.M.G., now D.S.O.]

SAINT George was yours of old to keep you true
That knightly in unknightly strife you stay,
Saint Michael too, he walk'd the fire with you
When you but took one wound on that red day.
God and your King now choose you Patrons new,
My friend, whose gold that fire did so refine.
Who are they? Who but Angel Orders nine—
Cherubs and Seraphs, Pow'rs and Princedoms all
Nine Ranks, with that one Aim Angelical?
Distinguish'd are their Services Divine
(Of black night-watches and of cock-crow wards)
By starry love that all but self regards.

THE WAY OF SPARKS

[On a railway in East Africa.]

'AS the sparks upward fly
Man is to trouble born,'—
The words remember I
Watching this night forlorn
(How many hours to morn?)
The train we travel by
To-night climbs far and high.
Her flaming woodfires raining sparks that glow—
Tell, as fires told in Uz, of fate and woe.

In Night's own auguries
I seek my heart's redress
From brooding fantasies.
If sparks tell earth's distress,
Stars, heavenly sparks, no less
Tell of Heav'n's tenderness.
Watch—rain'd from southern skies
Star-sparks of Heav'n—how they downward wen
Heav'n's nature is earth's trouble to befriend.

UNDER-STUDIES

[In the War-Zone.]

'TWAS only now the gold-hemm'd evening fell,
Then I forlorn, that heard no Angel's bell,
Fell to my 'Ave' at a bugle-cry.
Not here o'er prayer broods Mary's Image bland,
Yet yonder nurse may serve for her to stand—
Christ's Mother—since she works the Will on high.

Tho' there's no Mass these dreary morns to say—
Yet faces black or white or fever-grey
Are Hosts to seek Love by, or see Love in.
Our Church will own no Benediction rite,
And yet the Living Bread may bless my sight
When Christ looks out—a hurt man's eyes within.

LYCANTHROPY

[See Daniel iv.]

THEY drove him forth as beast and not as man
Till seven times had passed. At last he came
Back to his Babylon, but not the same.
Nay, for he now had learn'd from Lips on high—
Herded with cattle 'neath a dewy sky—
How Patience cannot fail where Passion can.
But we—War's wehr-wolves—we than wolves more fa
(Grace-hardened, deaf to Gospel, blind to Rood,)
Fain to seek night-long horrors of the wood
Where the blood-trail is red, the blood-scent high,
Shall we return in time?
God, were it not
Best for Thy world we should not come again?

THE CHAPEL OF MY VOW

[Saint Michael's.]

SO I am home to-day,
And I've a vow to pay
Here on the granite hill —
Where are the ample rocks and grey-boled wood,
Whither the bleak south-easter sweeps at will,
Whence the warm plain spreads widely to the west.
Yea, here I'd raise to God of stones undrest
A Shrine and Altar 'neath a wild-tree Rood.
In it's forefront I'd set a Form astride
That Foe who writhes and suffers joylessly,
Who, had he won, would no more joyous be,—
That tangled War who Peace's Prince defied.
A scroll I'd have beneath (forget it not !)
'Scribed with a pray'r from my own heart come hot—
' Lord, win us Heav'n on earth, by War of Yours
War down these Hells on earth—these wars of ours ! '

VICISTI

HAIL, Preacher, on Thy Lakeside Mountain set
Hail, Lake-Farer, with hems and sandals we
Hail, Jealous Lover of Gennesaret!

Lord, this my failure proves Thy victory,
For I was not in Thee nor Thou in me;
I blame my fault, I bless Thy jealousy.

Hail and nowise Farewell, O Faith benign!
By proof of Jealousy is prov'd Divine
His Love, Who spurn'd that lesser mood of mine.

TWO LAKES

[Galilee and Victoria Nyanza.]

'TIS with this lake as that, with Now as Then,
The ships go to and fro, and fishermen
Let down their nets for draughts, and storms distress
Sailors, and devils lake-shore folk possess,
And rich men find it hard to travel light
The way of Heaven, and flux and fever smite,
And oh! how many poor go shepherdless!
On just and unjust—suns rise, rains are pour'd,
And by that sign there's hope for everyone.
He is our hope. When all is said and done—
Our Lake were hopeless—were't not for Our Lord!

ENVOI

ENVOI

[Written after return to Mashonaland Native Work.]

IF aught of worth be in my psalms
It in the Black Christ's Hands I lay,
In those Nail-groov'd, hoe-harden'd Palms
He holds to me now ev'ry day—
The Black Christ in Whose Name I pray,
Yet Who (O wonder !) prays to me
In wrong and need and contumely.

If any gift of sight of mine
Our land's veil'd beauty should reveal,
My reader, to those eyes of thine,
That gift to Him that gave assign,
To Him (Whose Feet unsandalled steal
Over the granite tracks I tread)
Head-haloed by our rose and gray
Of twilights, or our gold of day,

Who near my red camp-fire will spread
His reed-mat, or on rain-bless'd days
Hoe deep His pattern-work of praise
Full in my sight.

O happy eyes
Are mine that pierce the black disguise
And see our Lord! O woe of woe
That I should see, that I should know
Whom 'tis they use that use Him so!

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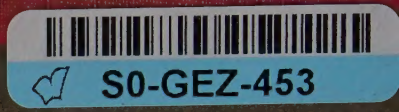
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